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OPERATIONS GROUP

27 Dec
Comptroller

19 December 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for Science & Technology

FROM: [REDACTED]

Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

SUBJECT: FBIS Monitoring of Muslim World [REDACTED]

REFERENCES:

A. DISST Memo to DDCI, dtd 4 Dec 79, Same Subj [REDACTED]

B. Comptroller Memo to DCI and DDCI, dtd 5 Dec 79, Same Subj [REDACTED]

1. This responds to your request for a memo describing how FBIS would reprogram resources to meet Dr. Brzezinski's requirement, stated at the 11 December SCC meeting, that CIA take decisions to improve FBIS reporting on the Muslim World. [REDACTED]

2. FBIS currently expends [REDACTED] dollars on Muslim World coverage. Operations are limited by technical, political and language considerations as well as by resources. However, assuming it can obtain mission and host government approvals and recruit the necessary language skills, FBIS can provide the depth and breadth of media coverage Dr. Brzezinski wants at an additional cost of up to [REDACTED] dollars. [REDACTED]

3. FBIS does not have these resources to spare. It is already overcommitted on FY 80 and 81 positions and funds as a result in part of new unprogrammed operations in the Persian Gulf. Reprogramming existing FBIS resources to meet Dr. Brzezinski's requirement without assistance from the SQT Directorate or CIA Comptroller will have a profound impact on present and future FBIS collection elsewhere in the world, on our services of common concern to the Intelligence Community, on foreign language support to the rest of CIA, and on morale.

a. It will mean that FBIS must forego its goal of establishing a worldwide capability to monitor the electronic media and must curtail its exploitation of the published media,

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SECRET19 Dec 79
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SUBJECT: FBIS Monitoring of Muslim World ☐

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restricting open media collection essentially to communist countries, the Muslim areas, Southeast Asia and Central America. There will be no primary source coverage of the media, radio or press, of non-communist Asia, South America and most of Africa. Hopes of building and maintaining a strong technical plant will also fade.

b. It will mean that FBIS must withdraw from long-sought locations in foreign countries and lose carefully nurtured acceptance of FBIS by foreign governments. In an atmosphere of growing anti-U.S. and anti-CIA hostility in the Third World, FBIS will have little chance to return to relinquished sites or of finding alternative locations whereas requirements for Third World collection can be expected to continue and even grow.

c. It will mean the separation of a large number of trained and experienced staff and foreign national employees whose skills will be hard to replace when collection priorities shift in the future. These termination costs are not included in the \$3.6 million estimate given above.

d. It will seriously impact on the BBC Monitoring Service's own products and services and hence on its access to resources already at a stringent level. If we cannot signal continuing strong USG support for worldwide radio monitoring, it will not take long for British Government support to also weaken. The BBC contributes a third of the total FBIS radio monitoring output. ☐

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4. This is too high a price to pay. There is no other form of intelligence collection more cost effective than that provided by FBIS. FBIS collection capabilities, developed painfully over many years, should not be sacrificed to meet new collection requirements in South Asia. FBIS is faced with need for growth. The U.S. Government has an urgent need to build a strong foreign media collection system which can keep pace with the growing sophistication and importance of the media in the political, economic and social life of the world community; which is capable of covering turmoil and change in the Third World; and which is designed to survive the pressures and problems inherent in operating overt CIA activities overseas. The media is not just a source of news, it also shapes and makes the news. ☐

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SECRETSUBJECT: FEIS Monitoring of Muslim World ☐

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5. FBIS has not received the resource support it requires nor the support I believe it could gain from the NSC Staff, GME/RMS and the Congress were Agency management prepared to press our case. FY 81 increases have been made at RMS urging. FBIS FY 80 and 81 program plan proposals for a South Asia bureau and attendant resources were turned down. Needless to say we would be in better shape if it had been approved for FY 80. This process underscores the lack of emphasis on open source collection. ☐

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6. The Agency must decide if it will support the kind of foreign media collection effort the U.S. foreign affairs community will require in the 1980's. In view of overall Agency resource problems it is a difficult decision but one which should not be long delayed. Developments require that FBIS press forward. A CIA decision against growth will ultimately destroy the effectiveness of FBIS and lead to a USG decision to perform the function in other ways in other parts of the government. If we don't do the job, someone else must. I believe the level of FBIS operations should be identified as a special CIAP or NFIP budget issue in preparation of FY 1982 program plans. ☐

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7. The attachment describes the steps FBIS can take to provide the Muslim World coverage desired by Dr. Brzezinski. It also describes the resources needed, and the impact on FBIS lower priority programs and plans if these resources must be obtained by internal FBIS reprogramming. These options are not equally cost effective and will have to be tested by surveys and samples, but FBIS needs assurance of Agency resource support or other guidance before it proceeds. ☐

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Attachment:
As stated

DDS&T/FBIS ☐ ext. ☐ c 79)

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